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FEATURE ARTICLE

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Does self-verifying behavior in job interviews help secure job offers, even if it reveals negative information about the self?

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Abstract

Although research demonstrates that self-verification striving can have positive outcomes in the hiring process, it remains unclear how this drive to present oneself authentically manifests in candidates' behavior during job interviews. We examine whether self-verifying behavior, including revelation of negative information about the self, is related to success in job interviews. Study 1 showed that self-verification striving among 112 MBA students predicted their self-verifying behavior during mock job interviews, which in turn led to success in converting interviews into actual offers 6 months later. Using a sample of 102 recent job seekers, Study 2 showed that self-verification striving was associated with the extent to which candidates disclosed negative information about themselves during real job interviews, ultimately predicting their interview success.

KEYWORDS

authenticity, job interviews, personnel selection, self-presentation, self-verification

1 | INTRODUCTION

There is substantial evidence that authenticity—a concept which assumes there is a true inner self within each person, and that one achieves fulfillment as a human being by expressing this inner self through observable actions (Guignon, 2004)—has positive outcomes for the actor (e.g., Ilies, Morgeson, & Nahrgang, 2005) as well as for social interactions (e.g., Liu & Perrewe, 2006). For example, working at a company that encourages its employees to bring their "whole selves" to work nurtures authentic self-expression and leads to positive outcomes such as organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Cable, Gino, & Staats, 2013). Being interviewed for a job, on the contrary, is a context decidedly less hospitable to authentic self-expression (i.e., behavior that expresses one's inner self). Job interviews have been described as a strong situation (Mischel, 1973) that tends to elicit a desire to "put one's best foot forward" and "sell oneself" rather than "be true to oneself" or "expose one's flaws" (Levashina & Campion, 2006).

Nevertheless, individuals vary in terms of how much of their true selves they present in their daily interactions (Lehman, O'Connor, Kovàcs, & Newman, 2019). Self-verification striving (Cable & Kay, 2012) refers to how some individuals are more motivated to "promote the survival of [one's] self-conceptions, regardless of whether the self-conception happens to be positive or negative" (Swann, 1987, p. 1039) than others. Recent studies have begun to explore how self-verification striving plays out on the job market, and show that candidates with a strong drive to self-verify find better fitting jobs, ultimately leading to higher job performance and satisfaction (Cable & Kay, 2012). Moreover, recent evidence suggests that self-verification striving can also have positive outcomes in job

interviews (Moore, Lee, Kim, & Cable, 2017). However, we know very little about how self-verification striving manifests behaviorally during job interviews. Moore and colleagues (2017) showed that high self-verifiers use language differently in job interviews than their less self-verifying peers (e.g., using more function words when they speak), but they did not examine if the content of what these candidates say—particularly information that they share about themselves—is different too. Specifically, the authors note that they "were not able to determine whether candidates reveal more or less 'good' or 'bad' information about themselves as a function of self-verification striving" (Moore et al., 2017, p. 1508).

In this paper, we focus on self-verifying behavior, which we define as job candidates' sharing of unembellished self-related information that is in line with their self-views. Specifically, we examine self-verifying behavior as a function of candidate self-verification striving and address two questions: Do candidates with a strong drive to self-verify reveal more about themselves in job interviews than individuals with a weaker self-verification drive, and in particular, are they more likely to reveal *negative* information about themselves? And, if they do reveal negative information, do these revelations help them secure job offers? In answering these questions, we make several contributions. First, we add to existing literature by shedding light on the behavioral mechanism through which self-verification striving influences success in job interviews. Although some research has begun to explore self-verification striving in employment contexts (Cable & Kay, 2012; Moore et al., 2017), this paper is the first to look at the content of what candidates discuss during job interviews as a function of their self-verification striving. We show that candidates who strive to self-verify enact that drive behaviorally in job interviews, and that one important way how candidates do this is by revealing negative information about themselves.

Second, we contribute a unique and novel perspective to the literature on impression management (i.e., trying to create favorable perceptions) in interviews (Levashina & Campion, 2007). Research on candidates' behavior in job interviews has historically focused on self-enhancing and deceptive impression management behavior—and thus, positive content—rather than self-verifying behavior—which can involve *negative* as well as positive content (Tsai & Huang, 2014). Conceptually, however, only negative content about the self allows researchers to differentiate the motive of creating a favorable image (i.e., impression management) from the motive of staying true to oneself (i.e., self-verification). True positive information can be shared to create a favorable image (e.g., sharing a personal strength to appear attractive) and/or to self-verify (e.g., sharing a personal strength to present one's true self). In contrast, negative information focuses on behavior that is less likely to create a favorable image: revealing information about the self that communicates that one might not be the perfect candidate for the job is clearly used to self-verify and *not* used to create a favorable impression. Negative information thus helps to capture candidates' self-verification behavior in an undiluted way.

In addition, past research on defensive impression management, which is defined as "tactics used to passively protect or repair one's image" (Tsai, Huang, & Wu, 2010, p. 131), indeed involves negative information about candidates, but the core purpose of defensive impression management is to prevent an unfavorable image. For example, negative information can be covered up (deceptive defensive impression management, Levashina & Campion, 2007) or justified with lessons learned (honest defensive impression management, Bourdage, Roulin, & Tarraf, 2018). In contrast, self-verification is about staying true to oneself without being concerned about whether the resulting image might be favorable or unfavorable (Swann, 1987). To distinguish self-verifying behavior from impression management, we focus on revelation of negative self-information which reflects candidates' desire to be true to themselves. In our paper, we therefore provide insights on whether and to what degree candidates reveal negative information about themselves to stay true to themselves and what effects it has.

Third, our research has important practical implications for individuals applying for jobs, by being the first to show that revealing negative information about the self can be beneficial to one's chances of securing a job offer. In other words, we go beyond previous research showing that the dispositional drive to self-verify can increase job search success (Moore et al., 2017), and articulate how a candidate can capitalize on self-verifying behavior, in particular by revealing negative information about the self, to succeed in job interviews.

To this end, Study 1 examines whether MBA student candidates enact their drive to self-verify in a mock interview context, and whether this tendency is associated with candidates' later chances of job interview success. In Study 2, we develop a measure of the extent to which candidates reveal negative information about themselves in a real job interview to examine whether such revelations can lead to interview success among recent job seekers.

1.1 | Self-verification striving

Self-verification refers to individuals presenting themselves to others in line with their self-view, in order to "create a social reality that verifies and confirms their self-conceptions" (Swann, 1983, p. 33). The central idea behind self-verification is that people are inherently motivated to promote understandings of themselves that verify their self-perceptions, regardless of whether these self-perceptions are positive or negative (Swann, De La Ronde, & Hixon, 1994). For example, people seek feedback that aligns with their self-views (e.g., Swann, Pelham, & Krull, 1989; Swann, Stein-Seroussi, & Giesler, 1992), and favor relationship partners who see them as they see themselves (e.g., Swann et al., 1994).

Self-verification provides several benefits to individuals. First, self-verification helps to corroborate one's psychological coherence. This is important because stable self-views help people navigate through life by knowing who they are and how to behave (Swann & Pelham, 2002). In addition, self-verification helps initiate and maintain stable relationships (e.g., Swann et al., 1992). Self-verification during organizational entry is associated with higher levels of job performance and satisfaction (Cable & Kay, 2012), which suggests

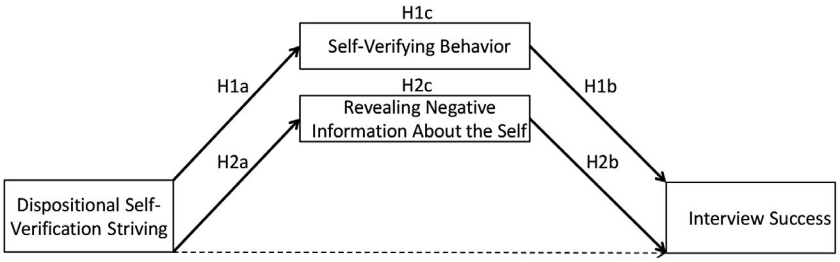

FIGURE 1 Proposed relationships between candidate dispositional self-verification striving, behavioral manifestations in the interview such as self-verifying behavior (Study 1) as well as revealing negative information about the self (Study 2), and candidates' job interview success

that it helps candidates to identify jobs with high fit and improves recruiters' accuracy when evaluating applicants.

Self-verification striving is conceptualized as a stable individual preference for presenting oneself in ways that reflect how that individual sees his or her true self (Cable & Kay, 2012). It is reasonable to wonder whether self-verification striving would be robust enough to encourage self-verifying behavior in job interviews, a context where prevailing norms and motives encourage showing the best version of oneself rather than self-verification. Impression management and faking perspectives have long dominated research on candidates' job interview behavior (e.g., Barrick, Shaffer, & DeGrassi, 2009; Bourdage et al., 2018; Levashina & Campion, 2007; Tsai & Huang, 2014). This paper explores the possibility that, despite strong incentives to create favorable impressions in job interviews, dispositional self-verification striving will foster self-verifying behavior in the job interview context, even if that means the candidate would be revealing unadorned negative information.

1.2 | How self-verification striving is enacted

An important first step to examine candidates' authentic behavior in job interviews is to examine whether candidates' self-verification striving manifests behaviorally in the job interview context at all. Cable and Kay's (2012) self-verification striving measure assesses stable internal preferences and beliefs that are not directly observable. However, self-verification striving can only influence recruiters' evaluations if it manifests in observable, self-verifying behaviors, such as presenting oneself in line with one's self-image and not masking who one is. Individuals with a stronger drive to self-verify should be more likely to engage in self-verifying behavior in the specific context of job interviews than individuals with a lower drive to self-verify. Accordingly, we expect a positive relationship between candidates' dispositional self-verification striving and their self-verifying behavior during the interview.

Signaling theory proposes that recruiters are attuned to honest signals from candidates in the job market (Bangerter, Roulin, & König, 2012). Given that many applicants misrepresent who they are in order to appear more attractive (Levashina & Campion, 2007), recruiters appreciate what they perceive as honest signals because they want to be able to trust what candidates are telling them (Bangerter et al., 2012). For example, if a highly self-verifying applicant admits to having no experience with the programing language C++, even though this skill was specified in the job advertisement, any other information shared by the applicant becomes more trustworthy (Liu & Perrewe, 2006). As such, self-verifying behavior during the job interview would help a candidate send a signal that the information he or she is sharing is true and accurate.

Consistent with findings from the consumer literature about the unexpected benefits of honestly presenting both product strengths and weaknesses (Ein-Gar, Shiv, & Tormala, 2012), presenting oneself in line with one's self-view may help candidates look credible and down-to-earth, and ultimately enhance recruiters' evaluations of them. In this vein, research on self-disclosure suggests that the act of disclosing information typically promotes feelings of closeness and liking (Collins & Miller, 1994; Cozby, 1972; Worthy, Gary, & Kahn, 1969). In addition, experimental research from the impression management literature revealed that accurate self-presentation was evaluated more favorably than self-enhancing and self-denigrating claims (Schlenker & Leary, 1982). Furthermore, recent findings from stigma research show that expressing a concealable identity can help avoid social rejection by being perceived authentically (Lynch & Rodell, 2018).

In line with these arguments, Moore and colleagues (2017) found that candidates high in self-verification striving used language differently in job interviews than candidates low in self-verification striving. Specifically, they used more function words (e.g., pronouns and prepositions) than less self-verifying candidates. The authors did not examine the content of the information that candidates were sharing, but they found that this language use resulted in high self-verifiers being perceived as less inauthentic and less misrepresentative than candidates low in self-verification striving, which, in turn, increased the rater's inclination to recommend these candidates for a job. We thus expect a positive relationship between candidates' self-verifying behavior—candidates openly sharing who they are—during job interviews and their success in job interviews. Based on the arguments above, we assume that candidates' self-verification striving has an indirect effect on their job interview success via their self-verifying behavior during job interviews (for an overview of the full model, see Figure 1):

Hypothesis 1 *(a) Candidates' dispositional self-verification striving is positively associated with self-verifying behavior during job interviews, which (b) is positively associated with job interview success, and altogether, (c) candidates' self-verifying behavior during job interviews at least partially mediates the relationship between dispositional self-verification striving and job interview success.*

2 | STUDY 1: BEHAVIORAL MANIFESTATIONS OF SELF-VERIFICATION STRIVING DURING JOB INTERVIEWS

2.1 | Method

2.1.1 | Sample and procedure

The sample for Study 1 was a group of students in their first year of a two-year global MBA program. As part of the MBA's skills development programs, Career Services invited all students to participate in a mock interview, assessed by a professional coach, in advance of the summer internship recruitment season. These mock interviews were organized and conducted independent of the study. Of the 407 MBA students enrolled in the program, 379 participated in the mock interview process. As students were preparing for actual job interviews, they were motivated to perform well.

As part of a collaboration with Career Services, we were able to collect data at multiple points in time. We collected students' background data (i.e., gender and age) from the school's program office. Between one and 3 weeks before their mock interview, an invitation for a voluntary presurvey went out to the 379 students signed up for the mock interview, asking them to complete the self-verification striving scale; 249 responded (T1). We asked these 249 students to complete a postsurvey (between 1 to 3 weeks after their interview) in which they reported the extent to which they had engaged in self-verifying behavior during the mock interview; 151 responded (T2). Finally, 6 months later (T3), we assessed these students' success in converting their summer internship interviews into offers. We gathered data from 197 of the original 249 participants, 171 of whom had attempted to secure summer internships (some students returned to prior employers, rejoined family businesses, or had other plans such as travel or parental leave). We were able to match 115 records across all three waves of data collection.[1] This represents 46% of the starting sample who reported their self-verification striving at T1.

Following previous research (Aguinis, 2014; Aguinis, Gottfredson, & Joo, 2013), we conducted analyses to detect influential outliers in our data. Specifically, in regression models, it is possible that model fit outliers as well as prediction outliers bias the results (Aguinis et al., 2013). Three cases qualified statistically as either model fit or prediction outliers. Following Aguinis et al.'s (2013) recommendation, the three outliers were omitted from further analyses to avoid biased results, which led to a final sample of 112 participants (*M*age = 28.84, *SD*age = 2.52, age range: 23–34; 29.5% women). The number of internship interviews in the final sample ranged from 1 to 15 with an average of 5.29 interviews (*SD* = 3.64).

2.1.2 | Measures

Self-verification striving

Prior to the mock interviews (T1), candidates reported their self-verification striving using Cable and Kay's (2012) 8-item scale. This scale reflects respondents' preferences for self-verifying behaviors and outcomes (e.g., "I'd rather have people know who I really am than have them expect too much of me," "I like to be myself rather than trying to act like someone I'm not"). Items were rated on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*, $\alpha = .77$.

Self-verifying behavior

On the postinterview survey (T2), candidates reported the extent to which they engaged in self-verifying behavior during their mock job interview. To measure these behaviors, we adapted the four items from Cable and Kay's (2012) self-verification striving measure that could be translated from a preference or desire to a behavioral manifestation in the interview context. The items were, "I tried to make the interviewer see me as I see myself, even if it meant allowing him/her to recognize my limitations,": "I tried to be honest about my personality and working style during the interview," "I tried to be myself rather than trying to act like someone I am not during the interview," and "I tried to show the interviewer who I really am, rather than have him/her expect too much from me." We used a response scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*, $\alpha = .84$.

To test if self-verification striving and self-verifying behavior are better considered as one factor or two factors based on our data, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). First, we specified a two-factor model where the items of the measurements of self-verification striving and self-verifying behavior loaded on two separate latent factors. Second, we specified a one-factor model with all items loading on a single factor. The analysis was conducted using R version 3.6.1 (R Development Core Team, 2016) and the lavaan package (Rosseel, 2012). Results revealed that the two-factor model, $\chi^2(53) = 99.66$, $p < .001$, comparative fit index (CFI) = .89, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .09, 90% confidence interval (CI) [.06, .12], standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) = .08, had a significantly better model fit than the one-factor model, $\chi^2(54) = 214.58$, $p < .001$, CFI = .63, RMSEA = .16, 90% CI [.14, .19], SRMR = .13, $\Delta\chi^2(1) = 114.92$, $p < .001$. These results suggest that self-verification striving and self-verifying behavior are distinct variables.

Job interview success

Our measure of job interview success was the ratio of the number of internship offers received to the number of internship interviews (i.e., self-report data at T3, 6 months after the mock job interviews). This measure represents the extent to which candidates are able to convert their typically multiple interviews (at a variety of different organizations, with different recruiters) into offers.

2.2 | Results

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients for key study variables. Self-verification striving correlated positively and significantly with self-verifying behavior in the interview, $r = .34$, $p < .001$, but did not correlate with job interview success, $r = .08$, $p = .418$. Self-verifying behavior in the interview,

however, was positively and significantly correlated with job interview success, $r = .26$, $p = .005$.

To test our hypotheses, we used SPSS 25 and the PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2018) to compute multiple linear regression models and a mediation model. Results are presented in Table 2, and include unstandardized as well as standardized regression coefficients. Hypothesis 1a predicted that candidates' dispositional self-verification striving would be positively related to self-verifying behavior during job interviews. We found a positive and significant association between candidates' self-verification striving and self-verifying behavior during the mock job interview ($B = 0.40$, $p < .001$; $f^2 = .14$). Therefore, Hypothesis 1a was supported.

Hypothesis 1b predicted that candidates' self-verifying behavior during job interviews would be positively related to job interview success. In support of Hypothesis 1b, self-verifying behavior during the mock job interview was positively associated with job interview success ($B = 0.08$, $p = .007$; $f^2 = .06$), controlling for self-verification striving.

Hypothesis 1c predicted that candidates' self-verifying behavior during the mock job interviews would mediate the relationship between dispositional self-verification striving and job interview success. We computed a bootstrapped confidence interval for the indirect effect (Preacher & Hayes, 2008) with 10,000 bootstrapped samples. We found a significant indirect effect of 0.03, 95% CI = [0.011, 0.065], from candidates' self-verification striving through self-verifying behavior to job interview success. Thus, Hypothesis 1c was supported.[2]

TABLE 1 Study 1: Intercorrelations, means, and standard deviations for key study variables

Variables	*M*	*SD*	1	2
1. Self-verification striving	5.36	0.76	–	
2. Self-verifying behavior	5.65	0.89	.34***	–
3. Job interview success	0.41	0.28	.08	.26**

Note: $N = 112$. Job interview success was measured as the ratio of the number of internship offers received to the number of internship interviews and ranged between 0 and 1. Self-verification striving and self-verifying behavior were assessed on a 7-point rating scale. All tests are two-tailed.

**$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$.

2.3 | Discussion

As an important first step to examine candidates' authentic self-expression, Study 1 allowed us to consider both dispositional self-verification striving and subsequent self-verifying behavior during a mock job interview. We found that dispositional self-verification striving was associated with self-reported behavioral manifestations of this disposition in the specific interview context at $r = .34$. The strength of the relationship is in line with what several studies have found regarding behavioral manifestations of traits (e.g., Funder & Sneed, 1993), and is consistent with evidence of how other traits manifest behaviorally in the interview context, such as how trait agreeableness is manifested as agreeable behavior ($r = .30$) or impression management behavior ($r = .28$) (Barrick, Patton, & Haugland, 2000; Kristof-Brown, Barrick, & Franke, 2002). In addition, candidates with higher levels of dispositional self-verification striving reported engaging in more self-verifying behavior during their mock job interview, which ultimately predicted their effectiveness at converting interviews into actual job offers half a year later.

TABLE 2 Study 1: Predictors of self-verifying behavior and job interview success

	Self-verifying behavior			Job interview success					
	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
Variable	*B*	*SE*	*β*	*B*	*SE*	*β*	*B*	*SE*	*β*
Constant	3.49***	0.57		0.26	0.19		−0.04	0.22	
Step 1									
Self-verification striving	0.40***	0.11	.34***	0.03	0.04	.08	−0.01	0.04	−.01
Step 2									
Self-verifying behavior							0.08**	0.03	.27**
R^2	.12			.01			.07		
F	14.56***			0.66			4.06*		
ΔR^2							.06		
ΔF							7.43**		

Note: $N = 112$. Job interview success was measured as the ratio of the number of internship offers received to the number of internship interviews. *B* values are unstandardized and *β* values are standardized regression coefficients.

*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$.

3 | STUDY 2: EFFECTS OF REVEALING NEGATIVE INFORMATION ABOUT THE SELF ON INTERVIEW SUCCESS

Study 1 provided evidence that candidates' dispositional drive to self-verify translates into self-verifying behavior during an interview, but the measure of self-verifying behavior does not assess the content of the information that candidates actually disclosed. For example, in other social contexts, such as shared college rooms and marriages, self-verifying individuals openly reveal negative as well as positive aspects of themselves (Swann et al., 1994; Swann & Pelham, 2002). Examining whether some applicants reveal negative information about the self, and if so how the revelation affects interview outcomes, represents an important component of understanding self-verification in the interview context because it allows to capture self-verifying behavior in one of its pure forms. For example, when candidates describe skills and experiences that they possess (i.e., positive information about the self), this behavior can be labeled not only as self-verifying behavior (candidates try to make the interviewer see them as they see themselves), but also as self-enhancing behavior (creating a favorable impression on the interviewer). However, when candidates describe personal flaws and weaknesses (i.e., negative information about the self), this behavior can be labeled as self-verifying behavior, but not as self-enhancing behavior. In other words, the findings of Study 1 raise the question whether revealing negative information about the self—a form of self-verifying behavior that is reliably distinguishable from self-enhancing behavior—hinders or helps in turning job interviews into offers. Therefore, the aim of Study 2 was to focus specifically on the extent to which candidates revealed negative information during a real job interview, and whether the extent of that revelation was associated with interview success.

According to self-verification theory, people strive to have their self-views confirmed by others, regardless of whether that self-view is positive or negative (Swann et al., 1994). However, as described above, revealing positive information about the self cannot be easily differentiated from self-enhancement, which is about presenting oneself in a positive light (Sedikides & Strube, 1997). Only the revelation of negative information about the self clearly differentiates self-verification from self-enhancement because negative information cannot serve the purpose of enhancing one's image, but it can serve self-verifying purposes. Candidates who strive for self-verification in general should be more open to revealing negative information about the self in job interviews. We thus expect a positive relationship between candidates' drive to self-verify and the extent to which they reveal negative information about themselves during job interviews.

Although revealing negative information about the self could potentially undermine candidates' evaluations, it may also elicit positive evaluations from recruiters by making candidates seem more credible. Self-verification theory suggests that staying true to oneself by revealing positive *and* negative elements of one's self-image eases communication and builds rapport. For example, Jay Gould, CEO of a tech company, recently stated that "people who are upfront about their shortcomings possess the element of humility that makes them a likeable person you want to work with" (Huppert, 2017).

Indeed, past research shows that self-verification increases intimacy and connectedness in long-term relationships (Swann et al., 1994). This outcome of self-verification may help in building a positive relationship with a recruiter, just as it does with a romantic partner (Burke & Stets, 1999). In addition, signaling theory (Bangerter et al., 2012) suggests that openly disclosed negative information about the self may serve as a valuable signal to recruiters because it indicates a willingness to self-reflect and be sincere. Recruiters appreciate candidates' authenticity, as it allows them to trust in the signals they receive, which can make such candidates more attractive (John, Brasz, & Norton, 2016). For example, experimental findings show that applicants who hid their marijuana use when filling out applications were perceived less trustworthy and had lower chances to be recommended for hiring compared to applicants who revealed their marijuana use (John et al., 2016).

Furthermore, openly presenting flaws can foster more favorable evaluations by providing a contrast with the positive information about the self that is revealed in a job interview, thus, highlighting the positive (Ein-Gar et al., 2012). Adding a negative piece of information to an otherwise positive description of a product or person can increase the salience of the positive information, because in situations where one receives negative conflicting information, one's focus on the initial positive information increases, making the positive information seem even more positive. This increased salience of the positive ultimately fosters more positive evaluations (Ein-Gar et al., 2012). Based on these arguments, we expect that the degree to which candidates reveal a piece of negative information about themselves during their job interview will outweigh potential negative effects and increase their chances of success in the interview. Further extending the arguments above, we assume that candidates' self-verification striving has an indirect effect on their job interview success via them revealing negative information about themselves in job interviews.

Hypothesis 2 *(a) Candidates' dispositional self-verification striving is positively associated with revealing negative information about themselves during job interviews, which (b) is positively associated with their job interview success, and altogether, (c) revealing negative information about the self during job interviews at least partially mediates the relationship between dispositional self-verification striving and job interview success.*

3.1 | Method

3.1.1 | Sample and procedure

The sample for Study 2 consisted of applicants who had taken part in at least one real job interview during the 5 weeks prior. One hundred thirty one participants were recruited through university

mailing lists, job agencies, and social media postings, and asked to participate in a two-wave survey about their interview experience. To be eligible for study participation, participants needed to have a strong recollection of their interview. We used two items to assess how well participants remembered the job application and interview process, but did not have to exclude any participant for not remembering. As an incentive for survey participation, participants were offered feedback about Big Five personality traits.

Participants completed two surveys with a time lag of 1 week between them. In the first survey (T1), participants were asked to focus on their most recent interview from the preceding 5 weeks. As a first step, participants were asked to list all the pieces of negative information about them (i.e., anything about them that might not be seen as perfect or ideal for the job) that had emerged in the interview, regardless of whether or not they had revealed it. As a second step, one of the listed pieces of negative information was randomly selected (the survey software was programed accordingly). Participants were asked to complete the newly developed measure of revealing negative information about the self (see Appendix and Measures for more detailed information). In the first step, of the 131 participants, 25 did not list any piece of negative information about themselves. As such, they could not complete the measure which assesses the extent to which they had revealed negative information about themselves because this measure refers to one specific piece of negative information, and thus, we excluded them from further analyses, resulting in a sample of 106 participants.[3] The 106 participants listed between one and seven pieces of negative information about themselves in their interview ($M = 2.2$, $SD = 1.2$). Most frequently, negative information about the self was about candidates' lack of abilities, skills, knowledge, or experience (36.9%, e.g., insufficient English skills), past negative events (16.3%, e.g., dismissal in a previous job), personality issues (11.6%, e.g., impatience), issues about their current situation (11.6%, e.g., prolonged unemployment), and misfit with the job that they applied for (8.2%, e.g., being overqualified).

One week later, in a second survey (T2), participants were asked to report their dispositional self-verification striving and whether the interview on which they had focused in the first survey had been successful (i.e., if the candidate had received a job offer or was invited to the next step of the selection process). We measured self-verification striving at T2 to achieve a temporal separation between the measurements of revealing negative information about the self from the assessment of self-verification striving, and because measuring self-verification striving at T1 could cause priming effects and result in upwardly biased estimates (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). We also assessed participants' Big Five personality traits at T2 using the BFI-K scale (Kovaleva, Beierlein, Kemper, & Rammstedt, 2013; Rammstedt & John, 2005). The personality assessment was used to reward study participation with an individual written feedback report. Two of the 106 participants withdrew their application, so their interview could neither be rated as successful nor unsuccessful. This resulted in a sample of 104 participants.

As in Study 1, we followed recommendations by Aguinis et al. (2013) and Aguinis (2014) and conducted analyses to detect influential outliers in regression analyses, which led to a final sample of 102 participants. Participants had a mean age of 28.29 years ($SD = 8.29$; range = 19 to 58 years). Among them, 76.5% were women and 54.1% had a university degree.

3.1.2 | Measures

Revealing negative information about the self

Given that we could not find any existing scale of revealing negative information about the self without justifications or embellishments (which are the centerpiece of defensive impression management scales), we created a scale to measure this construct. To develop the measure, we first conducted 10 in-depth semi-structured interviews (between 45 and 90 mins long) with individuals who had participated in at least one job interview in the preceding 12 months. Participants were between 23 and 38 years old, were working in various industries (e.g., banking, information technology, tourism, and retail) and had applied for a broad range of both part-time and full-time positions. Of the 10 participants, four were female and nine had a college or university degree. In the in-depth interviews, participants were asked to what degree and why they revealed negative information about the self to recruiters. The interviews revealed that when flaw-related topics came up in an interview (e.g., because candidates raised them or recruiters were asking for certain skills and experiences), participants tended to reveal negative information, but the extent to which negative information was truthfully and fully revealed varied (ranging from not sharing the flaw to fully revealing the given flaw).

Based on these results, we developed a measure of the degree to which candidates candidly revealed negative information. We first asked candidates to list all topics that came up in their job interview that they considered to be negative, independent of whether they had revealed them. Next, the online survey software was programed to randomly select one of the aspects listed, and asked candidates about the degree to which they had revealed this particular negative aspect. We developed eight items that referred back to this negative aspect (see Appendix). We pretested the measure on a separate sample of 29 participants who had participated in at least one job interview in the preceding 12 months. Several participants reported difficulties in answering the items containing the word *self-image*. Therefore, we dropped the two items that contained this word. We then ran a principal component analysis and dropped an additional two items with the lowest factor loadings (.53 and .61). Our final measure consisted of four items and are listed in the Appendix, $\alpha = .92$.

For Study 2, we used this measure to assess the extent to which negative information was revealed on a scale from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*, $\alpha = .91$. As described above, we measured the construct by having participants focus on one piece of negative information about themselves that they had previously listed as a

negative aspect that had emerged during their job interview—independent of whether they had revealed it—and that was randomly selected by the survey software (T1). This allowed participants to fully focus on one particular piece of negative information and provide in-depth appraisal (following similar procedures in past research such as König, Klehe, Berchtold, & Kleinmann, 2010).

Self-verification striving

Participants reported their dispositional self-verification striving (T2) with a slightly adapted version of Cable and Kay's (2012) 8-item measure, on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*). Four of the original eight items included references to the job interview context. To avoid inflating the relationship between self-verification striving and revealing negative information about the self during the job interview, we adapted those four items to have a more neutral phrasing. The adapted items were, "It's important for others to see me as I see myself, even if it means bringing people to recognize my limitations," "I try to be honest about my personality and skills," "I'd be willing to put up with some inconveniences in order to be with people who know who I am and what to expect from me," and "I work hard to find a place where people will accept me for who I am" ($\alpha = .76$).

As in Study 1, we conducted a CFA to test if self-verification striving and revealing negative information about the self are better considered as one factor or two factors based on our data. First, we specified a two-factor model where the items of the measurements of self-verification striving and revealing negative information about the self-loaded on two separate latent factors. Second, we specified a one-factor model with all items loading on a single factor. Results revealed that the two-factor model, $\chi^2(53) = 75.61$, $p = .022$, CFI = .95, RMSEA = .06, 90% CI [.03, .10], SRMR = .07, had a significantly better model fit than the one-factor model, $\chi^2(54) = 243.58$, $p < .001$, CFI = .62, RMSEA = .19, 90% CI [.16, .21], SRMR = .19, $\Delta\chi^2(1) = 167.97$, $p < .001$. Consistent with the results in Study 1, these results suggest that self-verification striving and revealing negative information about the self are distinct variables.

Job interview success

Participants' success in the job interview was coded as 1 if the interview led to success furthering their candidacy (reporting that they had received a job offer, had been invited to the next round of interviews, or to a one-day work trial) and 0 otherwise.

Control variables

Several control variables were included based on theoretical justifications (Becker et al., 2016). First, the extent to which negative information is revealed and whether it affects job interview success may depend on features of the information. Specifically, candidates might be more willing to reveal negative information about themselves if the piece of negative information is less relevant for the job and if it cannot be easily verified by the employer during the job interview or later in the daily work routine. We therefore controlled for relevance and verifiability of the negative information about the self that candidates revealed (or did not reveal) during their interview. Participants rated relevance and verifiability with four items each on a 7-point response scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*). A sample item for relevance was "This aspect was important for the job that I applied for," $\alpha = .90$, and for verifiability "During the job interview or daily work routine, this aspect would be easily detected," $\alpha = .93$.

Second, the extent to which negative information is revealed and whether it affects job interview success may depend on individual differences between candidates such as their core self-evaluations. Candidates with high self-esteem and self-efficacy, which are part of the overall construct of core self-evaluations (Judge, Locke, Durham, & Kluger, 1998), may be more willing to reveal negative information about themselves because they overall have a positive self-image. For example, applicants who have high core self-evaluations feel confident with who they are and what they can and cannot do, and should therefore be more likely to admit their shortcomings while at the same time coming across as capable. We therefore controlled for participants' core self-evaluations. We assessed core self-evaluations using the validated scale by Judge, Erez, Bono, and Thoresen (2003), using a 7-point response scale, $\alpha = .88$.

3.2 | Results

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients for control variables and key study variables. Self-verification striving correlated positively and marginally significantly with revealing negative information about the self, $r = .19$, $p = .052$, and significantly with success in the job interview, $r = .29$, $p = .004$. Revealing negative information was positively and significantly correlated with success in the job interview, $r = .29$, $p = .003$.

As in Study 1, we used SPSS 25 and the PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2018) to compute linear regression, logistic regression, and mediation models. Results are presented in Table 4, including unstandardized as well as standardized regression coefficients or odds ratios (OR). Hypothesis 2a predicted that candidates' dispositional self-verification striving would be positively related to the extent to which candidates revealed negative information about the self during job interviews. There was a positive and significant association between candidates' self-verification striving and revealing negative information about the self ($B = 0.37$, $p = .023$; $f^2 = .05$).

Hypothesis 2b predicted that the extent to which a candidate revealed negative information about the self during job interviews would be positively related to candidates' job interview success. In support of Hypothesis 2b, revealing negative information during the job interview was positively and significantly associated with job interview success ($B = 0.53$, $p = .008$; OR = 1.70).

Hypothesis 2c predicted that the extent to which a candidate revealed negative information about the self during job interviews mediates the relationship between candidates' dispositional self-verification striving and job interview success. We computed a bootstrapped confidence interval for the indirect effect (Preacher & Hayes, 2008) with

TABLE 3 Study 2: Intercorrelations, means, and standard deviations for control variables and key study variables

Variables	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5
1. Core self-evaluations	4.99	0.86	–				
2. Relevance of negative information about the self	3.77	1.71	−.08	–			
3. Verifiability of negative information about the self	4.43	1.85	−.06	.37***	–		
4. Self-verification striving	5.23	0.78	.06	.12	.06	–	
5. Revealing negative information about the self	5.79	1.31	−.06	−.19†	.06	.19†	–
6. Job interview success	0.51	0.50	.10	.08	.02	.29**	.29**

Note: $N = 102$. All constructs were assessed on a 7-point rating scale except for job interview success, which was measured dichotomously (1 = success). All tests are two-tailed.
†$p < .10$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$.

10,000 bootstrapped samples. Results revealed an indirect effect of 0.20, and the 95% CI = [0.022, 0.563] from candidates' self-verification striving through revealing negative information about the self to interview success excluded zero. Thus, Hypothesis 2c was supported.

3.3 | Discussion

In Study 2, we examined how the extent to which candidates revealed negative information in a real job interview is related to self-verification striving as well as job interview success. Mediation analysis revealed that the extent of negative information disclosed in an interview is a mediator of the relationship between dispositional self-verification striving and interview success. Furthermore, we found that candidates who revealed negative information more candidly were more successful advancing in the selection process or getting a job offer. This shows the benefit of revealing negative information about the self, even in the context of job interviews.

4 | GENERAL DISCUSSION

The job interview is a context in which inauthentic behavior, such as misrepresenting oneself and one's skills and abilities in ways that align with the job requirements, is prevalent (Levashina & Campion, 2006). Literature on impression management in the interview typically assumes that candidates try to mask or embellish past failures and sugarcoat their limitations to create favorable impressions or avoid unfavorable impressions, and thus, increase their chances of getting a job (e.g., Tsai et al., 2010). However, presenting oneself in a way that is in line with one's warts-and-all self-image not only fulfills the natural need to self-verify (Swann, 1983), but also varies across individuals (self-verification striving, Cable & Kay, 2012). In addition, the dispositional drive to self-verify can increase the chances of receiving a job offer (Moore et al., 2017), but the behavioral mechanism through which this disposition influences interview success remained unclear.

We proposed and found that highly self-verifying candidates increase their chances of job interview success by enacting their self-verification striving behaviorally and sharing different information in the interview. In two field studies conducted with different sample characteristics (MBA students and a sample of diverse job applicants), we found that self-verifying behavior, particularly revealing negative information about the self, increased candidates' success in job interviews to some degree. Study 1 focused on self-reported self-verifying behavior during mock job interviews of MBA students and their success in converting interviews into internship offers 6 months later. Study 2 focused on examining the effects of revealing negative information about the self during a real job interview on interview success in a sample of candidates applying for a broad range of jobs. Results suggest that candidates put their self-verification striving into action, and that self-verifying behavior slightly improves candidates' chances of landing job offers, even if this means being an open book about one's personal flaws and weaknesses.

4.1 | Implications for theory

Our research contributes to the literature on impression management and faking, specifically in organizational contexts. To date, little is known about the mediating mechanisms of the effects of self-verification on career outcomes such as being hired. We show that self-verification striving in job interview contexts indeed matters. Candidates do behave differently depending on the strength of their self-verification drive (Study 1). In addition, our research offers the first evidence (we are aware of) that the extent to which candidates revealed negative information about themselves is a mediating mechanism between dispositional self-verification striving and interview success (Study 2).

We also contribute to the literature on self-presentation in personnel selection by focusing on the role of authenticity and negative information in the job interview process. Humans are assumed to have two fundamental motives—the motive to self-enhance and the motive to self-verify (Sedikides & Strube, 1997; Swann, 1990). Scholars of impression management and faking in the interview have long focused on behaviors that are triggered by the self-enhancement motive (Barrick et al., 2009; Bourdage et al., 2018; Levashina & Campion,

TABLE 4 Study 2: Predictors of revealing negative information about the self and job interview success

	Revealing negative information about the self						Job interview success (1 = success)								
	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4			Model 5		
Variable	*B*	*SE*	*β*	*B*	*SE*	*β*	*B*	*SE*	OR	*B*	*SE*	OR	*B*	*SE*	OR
Constant	6.58***	0.86		4.84***	1.13		−1.65	1.38		−5.50**	2.12		−8.30***	2.44	
Step 1															
Core self-evaluations	−0.11	0.15	−.07	−0.13	0.15	−.09	0.27	0.24	1.30	0.25	0.25	1.29	0.31	0.26	1.37
Relevance of information	−0.19*	0.08	−.25*	−0.21**	0.08	−.28**	0.11	0.13	1.11	0.08	0.13	1.08	0.20	0.15	1.22
Verifiability of information	0.11	0.07	.15	0.10	0.07	.15	−0.01	0.12	0.99	−0.01	0.12	0.99	−0.07	0.13	0.93
Step 2															
Self-verification striving				0.37*	0.16	.22*				0.77**	0.29	2.17	0.62*	0.30	1.86
Step 3															
Revealing negative information about the self													0.53**	0.20	1.70
R^2	.06			.11											
F	2.10			2.98*											
ΔR^2				.05											
ΔF				5.33*											
Nagelkerke R^2							.02			.12			.22		
Model χ^2							1.89			9.85*			18.07**		
Δ Nagelkerke R^2										.10			.11		
Model $\Delta\chi^2$										7.96***			8.22**		

Note: $N = 102$. OR = odds ratio. *B* values are unstandardized and β values are standardized regression coefficients.

*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$.

2007). However, there has been a lack of attention on identifying candidate behaviors triggered by the self-verification motive, and how such behaviors affect candidates' interview outcomes. To date, only Moore and colleagues (2017) and Cable and Kay (2012) have explored the role of self-verification in job interviews for candidates and Bourdage et al. (2018) recently introduced the idea of applicants using true information to justify past negative events. The present paper extends this past research by focusing on the content of the information candidates openly share in the interview process as a function of their self-verification drive, and in particular the extent to which candidates blatantly reveal negative information about themselves.

In addition, previous research on romantic relationships has revealed that self-enhancement is more prevalent in newly formed relationships such as dating partners, whereas self-verification is more prevalent in enduring relationships such as marriages (Swann et al., 1994). The present research suggests that while job interviews motivate candidates to create favorable perceptions (similar to dating contexts), they can be seen as the potential starting point of a marriage between candidate and organization—a bond that is built on trust and requires authenticity.

4.2 | Limitations and future research directions

The present research offers a first look at candidates' behavior that fulfills their need to self-verify, but the low sample size in both studies is a serious limitation. Even though it is challenging to examine individuals who participate in real interviews, it is important that future research uses larger sample sizes to increase power. In addition, Study 1 and the main part of Study 2 rely preliminarily on candidate self-reports. The pilot study of Study 2 (that used interview data to build our measure of revealing negative information about the self) provides support through additional data sources such as qualitative interviews with candidates, but it would be useful for future research to examine further perspectives. In particular, the job interview is an interactive situation, but the data of the present studies come from only one half of that interaction (i.e., from the applicant but not the interviewer). Thus, it would be important to capture how recruiters react to the flaws that candidates reveal to understand the mechanism of the beneficial effects of revealing negative information about the self.

Another limitation is that in both studies, participants did not report their self-verifying behavior directly after the interview. The time lag between the interviews and the assessment of self-verifying behavior during the interview might have brought along a memory bias. In Study 1, however, it was the only mock interview in which the students participated during that time so that they should have been able to remember the interview well. In Study 2, we assessed how well participants were able to remember the interview. As such, we had the possibility to exclude those with weak memory, which should have mitigated the influence of memory bias in this study.

A major limitation of Study 1 is that it makes the assumption that applicants in internship interviews used self-verifying behavior in the same way and to the same extent as in their mock interview, but this assumption cannot be verified or tested with this study design. For example, it remains unclear if the feedback that applicants received after the mock interview affected applicants' subsequent behavior in their actual interviews. However, this issue is somewhat mitigated by the fact that the feedback was fixed to a 10-minute timeframe, and thus, standardized in length. In addition, Study 2 circumvents this limitation by assessing applicants' self-verifying behavior (in the form of revealing negative information about the self) with regard to a real job interview.

A major limitation of Study 2 is that it does not acknowledge alternative forms of *not* revealing negative information about the self. For example, candidates might not have any negative information to share, or they might hide the negative information completely so that it does not emerge in the interview at all. Future research should therefore examine how and why interview success is influenced if applicants, for example, are not aware of their shortcomings (e.g., due to a lack of information about job demands) or intentionally steer the interview toward their strengths so that the interview is shielded from any shortcomings. For this purpose, the procedures of Study 2 could be complemented and enhanced by also assessing if and why there are (or are not) any shortcomings to reveal in the first place and candidates' strategies to keep negative information from emerging in an interview.

Furthermore, future research investigating potential boundary conditions of the positive effects of self-verifying behavior and revealing negative information about the self on interview success (Gibson, Harari, & Marr, 2018) is warranted. Study 2 acknowledged potential influences of two attributes of the negative information revealed (i.e., relevance for the job, verifiability by the employer) and of candidates' personality (i.e., CSE), but more influencing factors are plausible. It seems reasonable to assume that self-verifying behavior and revealing negative information about the self exert their positive effects for candidates particularly when there is already a good fit between a candidate and the job. In this regard, it would be interesting to examine at what critical level of candidate-job fit revealing negative information backfires, such that it negatively impacts interview performance. Past research indicates that only strong candidates with high levels of self-verification striving were more likely to receive a job offer but not weak candidates (Moore et al., 2017). Although we were able to show that self-verifying candidates more openly presented themselves in job interviews, we were not able to determine the role of candidate-job fit in this process. In addition, past research suggests that self-verification striving helps candidates identify jobs and organizations that provide a good fit (Cable & Kay, 2012). This could imply that high self-verifying candidates with high degrees of job-fit constitute a selective sample of applicants. Finding answers to these questions about candidate-job fit and potency is a worthwhile endeavor for future research.

Why and when self-verifying behavior may help secure job offers may also depend on the extent and severity of negative information that candidates reveal. For example, too little disclosure of negative information might seem inauthentic while too much might lead to unfavorable inferences about candidates' qualities. In addition, the influence of disclosing negative information could depend on

severity such that revealing minor shortcomings may be perceived as pseudo disclosures, but revealing too severe shortcomings may be perceived as red flags and lead to disqualifications. We encourage future research to examine if there is a sweet spot of revealing negative information about the self and how it is characterized.

A related potential boundary condition involves whether and how revealing negative information about the self involves impression management processes. For example, applicants may only disclose negative information if it is unlikely to harm their image and would help them make a good impression. Indeed, in Study 2, more relevant information was less likely to be revealed by candidates. This may suggest that tactical choices were made about which kind of negative information to reveal. It also implies that revealing negative information about the self might not always and not only be a "pure" and "authentic" self-verifying behavior; but it may also be used strategically, for example, to appear humble or stand out. Thus, revealing negative information about the self may involve more than just the motive of staying true to oneself. Future research should thus examine candidates' motives for disclosing negative information about the self.

As another related boundary condition, it is possible that revealing negative information about the self is particularly effective if paired with (i.e., preceded or followed by) positive information (Lynch & Rodell, 2018). In fact, self-enhancement and ingratiation, which involve sharing positive information, are known to increase interview ratings (Barrick et al., 2009). Positive information could also be relevant to counterbalance the negative information disclosed such that there might be a critical proportion of positive to negative information. Future research should hence assess or manipulate the amount and intensity of negative and positive information throughout the whole interview. One way to tackle this empirically would be to design an experiment in which the disclosure of negative information is embedded (vs. is not embedded) in a context of self-enhancement and ingratiation tactics, with varying proportions of positive and negative information and using interviewer ratings as the dependent variable.

In addition, it remains to be tested how self-verifying behavior is distinct from the recently introduced measure of honest defensive impression management, which also includes admitting negative information about the self, but—in contrast to the concept of self-verification—with the aim of avoiding negative impressions by, for example, emphasizing one's regrets and lessons learned (Bourdage et al., 2018). Thus, an important question that needs to be answered is: What are the implications of blatantly sharing negative information about the self (which is the core idea of self-verification) versus adding a positive spin such as expressing lessons learned (which is the core idea of honest defensive impression management)?

4.3 | Implications for practice

An important practical implication of this research is that blatantly sharing one's flaws is not necessarily a disadvantage during job search. The first instinct of applicants may be to downplay or hide negative information about themselves, such as past failures and personal weaknesses, when applying for a job (Roulin, Krings, & Binggeli, 2016). However, instead of suppressing negative elements of one's self-image, our research suggests that it does not hurt and can even be valuable for candidates to openly reveal negative details. Such disclosure of flaws could be incorporated into training material for applicants.

In addition, recruiters value honest signals because they allow them to make accurate evaluations and predictions (Cable & Kay, 2012). How can organizations find ways to persuade candidates to act authentically in job interviews? Maybe one way could be to inform candidates that authenticity and exhibiting one's true self may increase their chances of being hired. In addition, organizations could create settings in which candidates feel free to reveal honest information about themselves, even if this information is negative. For example, following the benefits of realistic job previews (Landis, Earnest, & Allen, 2014), recruiters could deliberately reveal negative information about the job and the organization to create a space of trust in which candidates open up (Wilhelmy, Kleinmann, König, Melchers, & Truxillo, 2016).

4.4 | Conclusion

Authenticity implies remaining true to oneself instead of conforming to external influences and expectations of others (Kernis, 2003; Wood, Linley, Maltby, Baliousis, & Joseph, 2008). However, a job interview is a situation with strong external influences and expectations of candidates (Mischel, 1973). Our research shows that candidates with a strong desire to present their authentic selves to others make head against these expectations by not only candidly revealing positive information, but also negative information about themselves, which *enhances* rather than hinders their chances of getting job offers. These findings underscore the importance of an authenticity perspective in personnel selection, and hopefully encourage more research on authentic behavior in authenticity-adverse settings such as the job interview.

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ENDNOTES

[1] A response nonresponse analysis showed that the 115 participants who responded at T1, T2, and T3 did not differ significantly

in interview success from the 56 participants who did not complete the survey at T2 but reported their interview success at T3, $t(169) = -0.36$, $p = .720$. Additionally, we found that the 115 participants who responded at all three time points did not differ significantly in self-verification striving or self-verifying behavior from the 36 participants who only completed the surveys at T1 and T2, $t(149) = -1.03$, $p = .307$ and $t(149) = -1.39$, $p = .168$.

[2] Our outcome measure of job interview success is the ratio of the number of internship offers received to the number of internship interviews. Such a measure can be understood as a number of Bernoulli trials with two possible outcomes, namely interview success or failure (Ferrari & Comelli, 2016). Taking this into account, we reran our analyses and employed generalized linear models with a binomial distribution and logit link (Smithson & Merkle, 2014) using R. Consistent with our results reported above, we found that self-verifying behavior during the mock job interview was positively associated with job interview success ($b = 0.25$, $p = .026$), controlling for self-verification striving. Also, we found a significant indirect effect of 0.10 from candidates' self-verification striving through self-verifying behavior on job interview success, with a bias corrected bootstrap confidence interval of 95% CI = [0.098, 0.209].

[3] The 25 participants who were not able to complete the measure of revealing negative information about the self (because no topic came up in their interviews that involved negative information about the self) did neither differ significantly in self-verification striving, $t(129) = -1.69$, $p = .094$, nor in interview success, $\chi^2(1) = .03$, $p = .865$, from the remaining 106 participants who listed at least one topic that involved negative information about the self and were able to complete the measure.

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APPENDIX

REVEALING NEGATIVE INFORMATION ABOUT THE SELF SCALE

1. **I depicted this aspect truthfully during the job interview.**
2. **I did not misrepresent myself with regard to this aspect during the job interview.**

3. **I presented myself realistically with regard to this aspect during the job interview.**
4. **I depicted this aspect the way I see myself during the job interview.**
5. I depicted this aspect according to my self-image during the job interview.
6. I depicted this aspect in a way that corresponds to my self-image during the job interview.
7. I depicted this aspect realistically during the job interview.
8. I depicted this aspect neither more positively nor more negatively than I see myself during the job interview.

Measured using a 7-point scale from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*.

This measure refers to one specific piece of negative information. Final items are in bold.